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LIBYA

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INTERVIEW WITH MU'AMMAR AL-QADHDHAFI

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[Interview with Mu'ammār al-Qadhafī by A. Sofronov in Tripoli, Libya on the occasion of a conference dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the Libyan revolution; date not specified]

[Text] Not too long ago, a delegation of Soviet social organizations headed by Candidate Member of the CPSU Central Committee and Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Inventions and Discoveries, Yu. N. Pugachev, visited Libya's capital, Tripoli. Our good friend Yegipta Abdurrahman al-Khamisi, laureate of the international Lenin prize "For strengthening peace between peoples" and revolutionary poet, flew with us to Tripoli. Our delegation was flying to a conference dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the Libyan revolution.

The flight was like any flight...A stop in Vienna. A cup of hot coffee... Then a leisurely trip in search of our little waiting room... "Amsterdam," "Paris," "Tel-Aviv" and finally our waiting room from where we must set out to Tripoli...

I remember a military parade at a seaside square in Tripoli. Powerful tanks and artillery moved forward, column after column, along the seashore which was visible from our platforms. The words which Mu'ammār Qadhdfafi spoke there at the square stayed in my mind.

M. Qadhdfafi sharply criticized the aggressive, adventurist policy of American imperialism in various areas on the planet and, in particular, in the Near East.

"Libya," M. Qadhdfafi emphasized, "is in favor of creating a broad front of the powers which are struggling against the intrigues of American imperialism the world over."

Having been in Tripoli scarcely more than a week and participating directly in the conference itself and a great number of other friendly and business meetings, I no longer thought that we would meet directly with Qadhdfafi himself. Everyday on television, literally until nighttime, we saw how busy Qadhdfafi was, how much he had to appear. But my friend, Abdurrahman

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al-Khamisi, an untiring optimist, assured me: "There will be a meeting." And the meeting did indeed take place. In the early evening, the day before our flight to Tunis, Omar Khamdi, one of Qadhdhafi's aides for public organizations, suddenly came to us at the hotel and invited us into his small mottled car. Dhamdi himself was behind the wheel. Just like 3 years ago, we went by Tripoli's noisy streets and now quiet alleys to a meeting with Qadhdhafi.

And, like 3 years ago, having been delayed for a moment near the sentries, we drove up to a broad tend. The tent was open and we went into it. Qadhdhafi rose from his desk and came to meet us. He was in a flying suit and greeted us like old friends. Firm handshakes. And here we are, already sitting around the wide table on which there are a telephone, manuscripts and files. Qadhdhafi smiles politely and says:

There is a lot of work now. More than there was during your last arrival. Many things have gotten complicated, but we haven't grown weaker. I can say frankly, we've grown stronger.

They see all this with their own eyes, says Khamisi. Our conference is going successfully.

Qadhdhafi nods his head.

Yes... "Successfully... They are reporting to me on it. I myself was not allowed to properly finish speaking at the conference.

There was a warm welcome...

Our main task now is unification. If we are together, it is hard to separate us and we are stronger... I repeat, our main goal is to strengthen the unity of all Arab states. Unity is our strength for achieving victory...

[Question] How do you see your future?

[Answer] We see our future in socialism. We have no other path, nor can there be one. We think that our Libyan revolution has played, is playing and will play a large role in this. We are glad--and this is not the only evidence for this--that the socialist countries support us. The threat of imperialism in the form of nuclear rockets is equal for our countries and for the socialist countries. The American rockets in Europe are such a direct threat to us. Together with the socialist countries, we rank with those who struggle against the nuclear threat.

Qadhdhafi said all this calmly, stopping from time to time to give a chance for translation.

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[Question] What are Libya's economic prospects?

Here Qadhdhafi smiled again.

[Answer] I don't want to overload your memory; they'll give you all the materials...I can say one thing: we are associating more and more closely with the socialist countries, but at the same time we are trying to conduct trade which is advantageous for us also with capitalist countries. But the main thing for us is to always be with friends...it is hard for Libya to live without friends.

[Question] And what is the role of writers in these great and crucial matters?

Qadhdhafi clearly did not expect this question, but, having smiled again, he answered:

[Answer] It is great, of course...You yourself know that perfectly well...

We had been in the tent with Qadhdhafi already over half an hour. I turned to Qadhdhafi:

[Question] May I, like last time 3 years ago, ask you to write some words of greeting to "OGONEK's" readers?

[Answer] With pleasure, said Qadhdhafi and he pushed a sheet of white paper toward himself. We sat in silence. When the page was written, he held it out to me.

"Thank-you very much..."

The letter said:

"I am happy to write in the pages of the magazine "OGONEK" words in my own hand expressing feelings of friendship, love and respect toward our friends in the Soviet Union. We will not forget all the good that they have done for us during the 15 years which have passed since the day of revolution. We give you, our friends, heartfelt gratitude for the great material and moral aid and support you have given us. We will remain loyal in our friendship which is based on mutual respect, a friendship which is sealed and will deepen in our joint struggle against the common enemy--imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

We hail our common struggle for peace and progress.

Long live the inviolable friendship between our nations!

Mu'ammarr Qadhdhafi

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We got up. Qadhdhafi said:

Consider that Libya is always hospitably open to you...And the most important thing: extend warmest greetings to your people.

Qadhdhafi shook our hands firmly. Already by the exit, I turned and saw his impressive figure dressed in a military flying suit.

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